

IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please AMEND claims 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, and 9 in accordance with the following:

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A media-distribution-resource management apparatus ~~which is a resource-managing shared media-distribution-resource management apparatus using resources and connected via a network to media distribution servers and content distributors,~~ comprising:

a resource-utilization-information management unit managing shared-resource information about both available network resources and available media-distribution-system resources;

a shared-resource management unit ~~distributing~~ allocating or ~~re-distributing~~ re-allocating the shared resources based on a resource utilization request from each content distributor;

a distribution management unit ~~which is provided in each media-distribution server and which performs both reservation management and distribution management of media distribution in~~ reserving a part of the shared resources allocated or re-allocated by the shared-resource management unit and distributing the part of the shared resources to each of the media distribution servers within a scope of a utilization right distributed or re-distributed by the shared-resource management unit;

a distributor management unit managing information about ~~a media~~ each content distributor ~~that wants to use the shared resources;~~ and

a viewer management unit managing information about a viewer permitted to access at least one of the media distribution servers.

2. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The media-distribution-resource management apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said resource-utilization-information management unit, ~~comprising~~ comprises:

a server-resource management unit managing resource information about a media-distribution server; and

a network-resource management unit managing information about network resources for media distribution.

3. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The media-distribution-resource management apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said shared-resource management unit, ~~comprising~~ comprises:

a resource-utilization-information extraction unit extracting available resource information from said resource-utilization -information management unit; and

a shared-resource-availability display unit displaying information about available shared resources for a ~~media~~ content distributor;

a resource-utilization-information input unit the ~~media~~ content distributor inputting a resource utilization request;

a shared-resource distribution unit distributing a utilization right of the shared resource in a specific time period to said distribution management unit installed in each of the ~~media~~ content distributors based on information that is obtained in each time zone by the resource-utilization-information extraction unit and resource-utilization-information input unit;

a shared-resource-utilization amount extraction unit extracting a utilization situation of the shared resource in a specific time period; and

a shared-resource re-distribution unit redistributing a utilization right of an unused one of the shared resources to said distribution management unit based on both the utilization situation and distribution request in a specific time period extracted by said distribution management unit.

4. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The media-distribution-resource management apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said distribution management unit, ~~comprising~~ comprises:

an available reservation-candidate display unit displaying available content candidates to be reserved within a scope of a utilization right distributed by said shared-resource management unit;

a distribution-reservation input unit making a viewer select at least one content to be distributed out of the displayed candidates;

a distribution-reservation management unit reserving distribution for a viewer based on the selection made by the viewer from the displayed candidates;

a direct viewing reception unit making a viewer candidate without a reservation within a media distribution time;

a shared-resource confirmation unit making an inquiry for said shared-resource management unit about whether an unused one of the shared resources is available, based on the selection made by the viewer from the displayed candidates;

a direct-viewing permitting unit permitting viewing within the media distribution time based on the utilization right re-distributed by said shared-resource management unit; and

a distribution-instructing unit instructing one of the media distribution server-servers to perform media distribution to a viewer that is permitted to receive direct distribution out of both viewers with the reservation of media distribution and viewer candidates without reservations.

5. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The media-distribution-resource management apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said distributor management unit, ~~comprising~~ comprises:

a distributor-information input unit ~~making a media distributor that wants to use the shared resource input information about the distributor itself~~ receiving from the content distributor an identifier of the content distributor; and

a distributor authentication unit authenticating the media content distributor based on the ~~shared resource input information~~ identifier.

6. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The media-distribution-resource management apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said viewer management unit, ~~comprising~~ comprises:

a viewer-information input unit inputting information about a viewer candidate; and
a viewer authentication unit authenticating the viewer candidate based on the input information.

7. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A computer-readable storage medium which records a program for enabling a computer to perform a ~~function~~ method of managing shared resources of media distribution servers and information about content distributors when the program is read by the computer, the ~~function~~ method comprising: ~~a resource-utilization information management function to manage~~

managing shared-resource information about both an available network resource and an available media-distribution-system resource; ~~a shared-resource management function to distribute or re-distribute~~

allocating or re-allocating the shared resource-resources based on a resource-utilization request from each content distributor; ~~a distribution management function which is provided in~~

~~each media distribution server and which performs both reservation management and distribution management of media distribution for~~

reserving a part of the shared resources as allocated or re-allocated and distributing the part of the shared resources to each of the media distribution servers within a scope of a resource utilization right distributed or re-distributed by the shared resource management function; a distributor management function to manage

managing information about media distributors that want to use the shared resource each content distributor; a viewer management function to manage and

managing information about viewers permitted to access at least one of the media distribution servers.

8. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A media-distribution-resource management apparatus ~~which is a resource-managing shared media distribution resource management apparatus using resources and connected via a network to media distribution servers and content distributors,~~ comprising:

resource-utilization-information management means for managing shared-resource information about both available network resources and available media-distribution-system resources;

shared-resource management means for ~~distributing or re-distributing allocating or re-allocating~~ the shared resources based on a resource utilization request from each content distributor;

distribution management means ~~which is provided for each media distribution server and which performs both reservation management and distribution management of media distribution for~~ for reserving a part of the shared resources allocated or re-allocated by the shared-resource management means and distributing the part of the shared resources to each media distribution servers within a scope of a utilization right distributed or re-distributed by the shared-resource management means within a scope of a utilization right distributed or re-distributed by the shared-resource management means;

distributor management means for managing information about ~~a media~~ each content distributor that wants to use the shared resources; and

viewer management means for managing information about viewers permitted to access at least one of the media distribution servers.

9. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A carrier signal which carries to a computer a program for enabling the computer to perform a function of managing shared resources of media distribution servers and information about content distributors when the program is read by the computer, the function comprising:

a resource-utilization-information management function to manage shared-resource information about both an available network resource and an available media-distribution-system resource;

a shared-resource management function to ~~distribute or re-distribute~~ allocate or re-allocate the shared ~~resource-resources~~ based on a resource-utilization request from each content distributor;

a distribution management function ~~which is provided in each media distribution server and which performs both reservation management and distribution management of media distribution for~~ to reserve a part of the shared resources allocated or re-allocated by the shared-resource management function and distribute the part of the shared resources to each of the media distribution servers within a scope of a resource-utilization right distributed or re-distributed by the shared-resource management function;

a distributor management function to manage information about ~~media distributors that want to use the shared resource~~ each content distributor; and

a viewer management function to manage information about viewers permitted to access at least one of the media distribution servers.